

29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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Dear Consultee,

### **The future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School, Chillerton, Isle of Wight Consultation**

Isle of Wight Council has received a letter from the Stenbury Federation, the Governing Body of both Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and Godshill Primary School, requesting that a consultation be carried out on a proposal to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School with effect from 31 August 2021. In essence this proposal, if agreed, will lead to the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with the pupils being offered a place at Godshill Primary School.

There is one other option that may be considered:

- That no change is pursued, and the current situation is allowed to continue

I am writing to invite your views in respect of this proposal from the governing body.

### **Background**

Chillerton and Rookley Primary School is currently a 91-place primary school for pupils aged 2 –11. The school had 35 pupils on roll in October 2020 and with no first choice preferences for a place in Year R for the 2021/22 academic year this is set to fall further to approximately 32 pupils. A school with such significant surplus places is not sustainable financially and not able to provide the breadth of curriculum for the pupils.

Godshill Primary School (a school federated with Chillerton and Rookley Primary School) is 3.4 miles away by road and is a 189-place primary school. In the 2020/21 academic year it had 128 pupils on roll which shows 61 surplus places. Therefore, it is possible that all pupils currently attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School (and those forecast to be attending the school in the future) could be accommodated within the surplus capacity at Godshill Primary School.

Schools operating at or near capacity are able to provide a better curriculum for the pupils and are more financially viable.

### **Reason for proposal**

The Stenbury Federation Governors have requested that the Local Authority proceed with an informal consultation to gauge community views on the possible amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School. In effect this would be the closure of one of the schools with the other accepting the pupils from the closed school. Their primary reasons for this are:

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- To ensure the continuation of high-quality education for the children in our rural communities by effective and strategic use of existing staffing and resources.
- To reduce the risk of both schools closing due to budget constraints and falling numbers on roll.

Where a Local Authority proposes to make significant changes to a school, including closure, it must follow a procedure set out by the Department for Education. This information and some Frequently Asked Questions are available on the following website: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/Schools/School-Consultation>.

## The Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek the view of all stakeholders on the principle of closing Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.

- This initial consultation will run from the 29 January until the 19 March 2021.
- A report outlining the consultation responses received will then be taken to the Elected Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills to decide if the proposal should continue to the formal statutory consultation stage.
- If approved, a statutory Public Notice would be published. This is a four week period in which any representations can be made to the local authority.
- A final report would then be taken to the Elected Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills or the Cabinet in the summer 2021 who will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

## Further Information

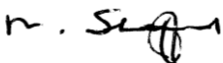
Due to Covid-19 restrictions and ensuring public safety, unfortunately we are unable to hold a public drop-in event at the school. However please send in your views and queries by email to [SandLBusinessSupport@IOW.gov.uk](mailto:SandLBusinessSupport@IOW.gov.uk).

If you would like to speak to an Officer then please make that request by email, briefly outlining your query so we can arrange a mutually convenient time for you to speak to an appropriate officer, either via conference call or telephone.

A website has also been set up with the details of the consultation which includes some 'Frequently Asked Questions' that may address any queries you have. To access this website please follow the link below: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Schools-and-Learning/Schools/School-Consultation>.

If you are unable to email or visit the above website and wish to make a comment then please write to me, Martin Shefferd, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, EII Court North, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG by 19 March 2021.

Yours sincerely,



**Martin Shefferd**  
**Strategic Development Officer**  
**Children's Services Department**